

Message Text

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FROM MEPC DEL

E.O. 11652: GDS

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SUBJ: HUMOR AND MISCELLANY AT ISRAEL-SYRAIN DISEN-
GAGEMENT MILITARY WORK GROUP MEETINGS, JUNE 1-5

1. FOLLOWING DETAILS ARE OFFERED TO ROUND OUT PICTURE
OF ATMOSPHERE WHICH PREVAILED AT THESE TALKS, AS WELL AS
INDICATE NATURE OF PARTICIPATION BY U.S. AND SOVIET
REPRESENTATIVES THERE, AND FACT DISCUSSIONS HAVE BEEN
RECORDED ON TAPE.

2. WHILE, AS WE HAVE REPORTED, THE PARTIES SPOKE
DIRECTLY TO EACH OTHER ONCE ICE HAD BEEN BROKEN BY
NEED TO CONSULT MAP TOGETHER AT SECOND WORKING MEETING
JUNE 2, JOKES AND LAUGHTER WERE MUCH MORE CHARACTERISTIC
OF ISRAELI AND UN PARTICIPANTS -- OFTEN JOINED BY
JOLLY EGYPTIAN BRIG GEN MAGHDOUB -- THAN OF SYRIANS.
MOST REPRESENTATIVE OF WHAT WE MEAN WAS FOLLOWING
EXCHANGE THAT OCCURRED JUNE 2 IN DISCUSSING RELEVANCE
OF 20-KM LIMITATION ZONE FOR SEA OF GALILEE (LAKE
TIBERIAS). SYRIAN BRIG GEN TAYARA, SPEAKING THROUGH
LEGAL ADVISOR AMBASSADOR TARAAZI AS INTERPRETER, ASKED
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ISRAELIS ABOUT NAVAL STRENGTH IN LAKE. SHAFIR (SMIL-

ING): "WHAT DO YOU MEAN? WE DON'T HAVE ANY NUCLEAR SUBMARINES THERE." TAYARA (UNSMILING): "YOUR BOATS." ISRAELI COL. SION (LAUGHING): "FISHING BOATS." TAYARA (UNSMILING): "THE MILITARY AND POLICE BOATS YOU HAVE THERE." SHAFIR (LIGHTLY): "THAT WAS BEFORE 1967. WE DON'T NEED THEM ANY MORE." TAYARA (UNSMILING): "YOU MAY NEED THEM AGAIN."

3. CONCLUSION ISRAELI DELEGATES TELL US THEY HAVE DRAWN FROM EXCHANGES SUCH AS THE ABOVE IS THAT SYRIANS WERE OBVIOUSLY INSTRUCTED TO BE FORTHCOMING AND COOPERATIVE, BUT THEY ARE A LONG WAY FROM CHANGING INTO JOLLY, JOKING EGYPTIANS.

4. ANOTHER POINT WORTH RECORDING WAS THAT BOTH PARTIES (BUT MORE OFTEN THE SYRIANS) OCCASIONALLY TURNED IN DIRECTION OF U.S. PARTICIPANT ASST. SECRETARY ATHERTON FOR CONFIRMATION OF A POINT THEY WERE MAKING REGARDING THE SECRETARY'S NEGOTIATIONS WITH THEIR GOVERNMENT. WHEN ATHERTON HAD REMAINED SILENT FOR A FEW MINUTES, CONVERSATION RESUMED AS IF THE EFFORT TO DRAW HIM IN HAD NOT BEEN MADE. CHAIRMAN SIILASVUO FOR HIS PART NEVER ASKED ATHERTON DIRECTLY TO RESPOND TO THESE INDIRECT INQUIRIES.

5. SOVIET COLONELS TATARNIKOV AND NICANDROV SIMILARLY KEPT THEIR SILENCE THROUGHOUT PROCEEDINGS. THEY (ALONG WITH U.S. PARTICIPANTS) DISCREETLY JOINED THE PARTIES AROUND MAP TABLE WHENEVER PARTIES WENT THERE, BUT OFFERED NO COMMENT. TATARNIKOV WAS ASSISTED BY UN RUSSIAN INTERPRETER THROUGHOUT.

6. UN AND EACH OF THE PARTIES POSSESS COMPLETE RECORDING OF PROCEEDINGS ON TAPE. SOVIET AND U.S. SIDES WERE GIVEN COPY OF TAPE OF ONE SESSION ONLY, THE MEETING OF JUNE 3.

7. ONCE AGAIN, ISRAELI STAFF WORK WAS FAR AHEAD OF ALL OTHERS'. AGREEMENT WAS REACHED ON (ARABIC-LANGUAGE) MAPS PROVIDED BY ISRAELI DELEGATION AND DRAFTED AND SECRET

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REPRODUCED MAINLY BY THEM. DISCUSSIONS OF TIMETABLE FOR DISENGAGEMENT AND OF DOCUMENT ENTITLED, "CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT AS AGREED BY THE PARTIES" WERE CONDUCTED ON BASIS OF ISRAELI DRAFTS.

8. SYRIANS SAT AT SAME TABLE AS EGYPTIAN REPRESENTATIVE MAGHDOUB, EGYPTIAN REPRESENTATIVE TO EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI MILITARY WORKING GROUP, BUT THEIR SEPARATE

IDENTITY WAS REGISTERED BY SEPARATE SIGNS FOR SYRIA
AND EGYPT ON THE TABLE.ABRAMS

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